

 parents

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## Our Family Could Grieve 2020, But We Had It Better Than Many

**BY JOSEPH WILSON**

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As 2020 ended and gave way to 2021, the refrains grew hackneyed: “2020: good riddance!” “What a trainwreck!” “Worst. Year. Ever.”

After a while I began responding with some attitude. “What if 2021 is worse?” I might say. “That’s grim,” they would respond; “you’re being so negative.”

But it’s really a positive outlook. My family and I were so incredibly lucky in 2020: no one got COVID, no one (permanently) lost a job and all three of our kids returned to school in September with minimal disruptions. We live in a house with enough square footage that there is usually a quiet room available if someone needs some space. The five of us actually like each other (most of the time) and have a good network of supportive family and friends.

**Some families are left to wonder if they will ever see their grandparents again in person. Here's one of those stories**

**(<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/covid-19-grandparents-and-the-future>).**

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Our situation is, to use some "woke" parlance, a form of privilege (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/covid-19-pandemic-privilege>). The case was not the same for many families in Canada. Cases of COVID disproportionately affected people of colour (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00079-eng.htm>), those with lower incomes (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/pandemic-covid-coronavirus-cerb-unemployment-1.5610404>) and precarious employment (<https://workplaceinsight.net/low-paid-workers-and-those-in-precarious-jobs-bearing-brunt-of-covid-19/>), and continues to do so (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/coronavirus-covid19-canada-world-january4-1.5860369>) into 2021. Those hit hardest by the pandemic have very real reasons to complain about 2020.

But often the most vocal complaints are from those people who escaped relatively unscathed. They are bored, perhaps, after sitting on the same couch night after night, or exhausted by yet another incomprehensible Zoom call, but they are not experiencing anywhere close to the injustice felt by others in the country who don't have the luxury of working from home in track pants and a concert T-shirt.

During the longest days of 2020, when I lost this sense of perspective and paced around the house grumbling about our situation, my kids were always the ones who brought me back to reality.

"I like having everyone home all the time," said my three-year-old, out-of-the-blue, after the first lock-down began in the spring.

**Pandemic privilege may be hard to acknowledge, but the reality is some people are able to weather this storm a lot easier than others. Read about that here (<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/covid-19-pandemic-privilege>).**

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She didn't know why everyone was suddenly around all the time, but she thought it was fantastic.

One of our daughters, not what you might call a "morning person," went to bed every night with a grin. Without having to run for the school bus at 7:15 the next morning, she would whisper conspiratorially, "I'm going to sleep in tomorrow."

After a long-planned trip to Italy was cancelled this summer, we spent two glorious weeks at a cottage north of Kingston. The kids chased frogs and became experts at pushing me off the paddleboard.

So I choose to not tempt fate by complaining about 2020 too much. A century ago people in this country had to wait out the Spanish Flu (<https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/arts-culture-society/killer-flu>) without Netflix. We could be living in North Dakota (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1109004/coronavirus-covid19-cases-rate-us-americans-by-state/>) where almost 12 per cent of the population (and rising) are infected.

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**Karen Habashi is an immune-compromised mother and she had one heck of a time in 2020. Read that here**

**(<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/immune-compromised-covid-19-canada>).**

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Or you could be one of the low-income or racialized Canadians who have been unfairly affected by the virus' impact. If that's the case, complain away. Perhaps people with privilege could help amplify these marginalized voices instead of steadfastly insisting that they are the real victims ([https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/adamson-bbq-white-privilege\\_ca\\_5fbfcb5ec5b68ca87f825990](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/adamson-bbq-white-privilege_ca_5fbfcb5ec5b68ca87f825990)).

We could insist on a vaccination roll-out program that starts with low-income communities to redress the glaring inequality of the virus' impact in 2020.

And then maybe when we say, "2021 is going to be so much better" we will have reason to believe it.

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